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Minutes

of

the

Working

Committee

July 1956

Herrenalb

Germany

COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER

World

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MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE

17-20 JULY 1956

HERRENALB, GERMANY

ATTENDANCE

Officers

Rev. Dr. O. S. TOMKINS, *Chairman*
Rev. Dr. J. R. NELSON, *Secretary of the Commission*

Members

PERCY W. BARTLETT, Professor H. D'ESPINE, Professor G. FLOROVSKY, Dr. G. JACOB, Professor A. C. OUTLER, Dr. E. A. PAYNE, Professor EDMUND SCHLINK, Dr. J. E. SKOGLUND, Professor T. F. TORRANCE, Professor L. J. TRINTERUD, Professor G. F. WINGREN

Substitutes

Dr. EUGENE VAN N. GOETCHIUS (for Bishop Dun), Bishop J. E. L. NEWBIGIN (for Principal Chandran), Professor RONALD E. OSBORN (for President Gresham)

Staff

Dr. H. H. HARMS, Dr. W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT

Visitors

Dr. KEITH BRIDSTON

Minute Secretary

Miss MARGARET RHODES

Apologies

were received from Principal CHANDRAN, Bishop DUN, President GRESHAM, Professor HARTFORD, Metropolitan JUHANON MAR THOMA, Professor KANTONEN, Professor KONSTANTINIDIS, Principal MARSH, Principal ROBERTS and Professor SKYDSGAARD

PROCEEDINGS

1. OPENING THE MEETING

The Chairman offered prayer to God for blessing and guidance during this meeting and in all the work of the Commission.

Following the roll-call by the Secretary, the minutes of the meeting of 25-30 July 1955 (FOC Paper No. 22) were approved.

2. THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Commission on Faith and Order is only one manifestation of the world-wide movement for Christian unity. Yet its rôle in the movement is unique, for it is the only representative international body with a singleness of purpose for the understanding and manifesting of unity. In a unique way it serves the whole Church, the churches, and the World Council of which it is a part. Membership in the Commission therefore carries with it the obligation for each person to promote continuously among divided Christians a recognition of the meaning of unity in Christ and of the urgency of expressing it in the lives of individuals, congregations and communions.

This Report attempts to take account both of developments in the work of the Commission which have, by God's grace, furthered the movement, and of ways by which the work may be strengthened and continued.

1. **CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS.** *For ten years the Commission has been honoured to have as its chairman Archbishop Y. T. Brilioth, whose participation in the Faith and Order movement began at the first large meeting in Geneva in 1920. Now he has reluctantly felt obliged, for reasons of health and ecclesiastical responsibilities, to resign the chairmanship. Therefore this month the Working Committee must nominate another person for election by the full Commission at its meeting in 1957.*

With the recent lamented death of Pasteur Pierre Maury, total membership in the Commission was reduced to 84. Nominations should now be made to bring the membership nearer the constitutional maximum of 100. Election and appointment may be made by the FOC and Central Committee in 1957.

2. *THE THEOLOGICAL COMMISSIONS.* Our main work continues to be done by special theological study commissions, which now number seven and include 75 members. Almost all of these groups have passed the initial stage of orientation and planning. They have entered the second stage, which is that of substantial study in common of specific questions.

- a) *Theological Commission on Christ and the Church — Europe.*
Bishop Anders Nygren, chairman.

A meeting was held in Lund, Sweden, from 31 August to 6 Sept. 1956. For reasons of illness or family responsibilities, six of the twelve members were absent. But the group present had a discussion of sustaining interest on questions of christology and the nature of the Church as raised in the following papers :

James Barr — “Christ in Gospel and Creed” (published in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 9/55)

Edmund Schlink — “Christus und die Kirche” (published in *Kerygma und Dogma*, 7/55)

Anders Nygren — “Kristus och hans kyrka” (Lund, 1955)
“Christus und seine Kirche” (Göttingen, 1956)
“Christ and His Church” (Philadelphia, 1956)

T. F. Torrance — “Royal Priesthood” (Edinburgh, 1955)

This discussion pointed toward the need for further study of the biblical witness to the relation of Christ and the Church, as well as the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church’s life and mission. Therefore the following papers are expected for the meeting at Mansfield College, Oxford, 24-31 August 1956 :

P. S. Watson — “The Holy Spirit and the Church”

M. A. Creasey — “Some Aspects of Early Quaker Christology”

J. Marsh — exegetical studies on some images of the Church in the New Testament

G. F. Wingren — “Weltmission und Weltgericht”

G. W. H. Lampe — “Holy Baptism as an ecumenical problem today”

Due to the pressure of many academic and ecclesiastical duties, Principal Marsh has been obliged to resign his position as secretary of this commission.

- b) *Theological Commission on Christ and the Church — North America.* Prof. R. L. Calhoun, chairman.

This commission held a well attended meeting in Greenwich, Conn., 8-12 August 1955. There was very exacting criticism of four fine papers on christology :

F. V. Filson — “Christ and the Old Testament”

W. N. Pittenger — “The Doctrine of Christ and the Doctrine of the Church”

N. S. F. Ferré — “The Humanity of Jesus”

P. S. Minear — “The Conception of the Church as the Body of Christ within the context of the different ways in which the New Testament speaks of Christ, the Spirit, and the Church”

In continuation of its work the group will meet again at Greenwich, 6-10 August 1956, and consider several more contributions :

W. Harrelson — “Israel as the Community of the Holy Spirit”

E. R. Hardy — “The Church as the Community or Sphere in which through Word and Sacrament the Redemptive Act of God in Christ continues to operate in history” (early Church)

J. Knox — chapters from “The Early Church and the Coming Great Church” (New York 1955)

It is plain to see that the course of study chosen by the European commission is very similar to that of the American, and that the two can strengthen one another.

- c) *Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions — Europe.* Prof. K. E. Skydsgaard, chairman.

The first meeting was held at Davos, Switzerland, 29 July - 1 August 1955. Only Prof. Bonis was unable to attend, but Bishop James of Melita substituted for him. The stimulating discussion provided opportunity for each member to express his understanding of the complex problem. An agreement was reached on the specific questions requiring immediate study, and these were referred to various members as preparation for the

meeting in Copenhagen, 28-31 August 1956. Papers already received or soon expected are as follows :

J.-L. Leuba — “What is Tradition as Traditum and as Actus tradendi ?”

S. L. Greenslade — “The Formation of the New Testament Canon : Motives and Principles”

G. Ebeling — *The meaning of sola scriptura*

K. E. Skydsgaard — “Einige Bemerkungen zur Geschichte des Traditionsproblems im römischen Katholizismus”

K. Bonis — “Holy Tradition according to the Orthodox View”

A comprehensive bibliography is also being prepared.

d) *Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions — North America. Prof. A. C. Outler, chairman.*

Two meetings with full attendance have been held so far, the more recent on 11-14 May 1956. A complete report of this has not yet been received, but it was planned that the following contributions be studied :

A. C. Outler — “The Sense of Tradition in the Ante-Nicene Church”

W. Pauck — “The Continental Reformers in the early phases of the Reformation”

J. J. Pelikan — “Tradition in Confessional Lutheranism”

E. R. Fairweather — “The Problem of Tradition in Anglican Theology to the time of the Tractarian Movement”

G. Florovsky — “The Rôle of Tradition in the dogmatic Decisions of the Ecumenical Councils”

D. W. Hay — “A Preliminary Survey of British Reformed Teaching”

It was decided that two persons should be added to this commission, subject to the approval of the Working Committee.

This subject of Tradition and traditions is proving to be one of distinctive interest in theological circles. A society of theologians in the central states of America is making a study ancillary to our own. And the lectures and publications of the two chairmen, as well as of D. T. Jenkins, have excited much thought about it.

- e) *Theological Commission on Worship — Asia. Principal J. R. Chandran, chairman.*

The excellent beginning to this work (as described in the minutes of Chicago 1954 and Davos 1955) is continuing under Mr. Chandran's direction. No meeting has been held since the significant conference at Bangalore in March 1955. But the continuation committee on "Indigenous Worship" in India has begun its work. And in March 1956 at the Bangkok conference on theological education, the chairman convened a number of persons from various countries to discuss the place of liturgics in education for the ministry, and also to foresee the kinds of smaller conferences on worship which might be held in Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan. The huge geographical spread of the Asian commission is still the chief hindrance to its work. But Principal Chandran is trying to have these national conferences planned for the summer of 1957, and adequate funds to pay for them must be sought.

- f) *Theological Commission on Worship — Europe. The Archbishop of York, chairman.*

The work of this commission has been delayed by the regrettable difficulty of convening a meeting. But very recently the secretary, the Rev. A. R. George, has completed a memorandum for study, as the basis for a meeting in the spring of 1957. This is an elaboration of the plan worked out in Evanston and Chicago in 1954. It proposes that the study follow two courses: (1) The theology of worship in the Bible, including a consideration of man's relation to his Creator, as well as the biblical concepts of sacrifice. (2) Imagery in worship, that is, the use of verbal and pictorial symbols, and the continuance of forms of worship which are either normative or diverse. As common literature for this study, a bibliography has been prepared by Archdeacon Cobham.

- g) *Theological Commission on Worship — North America. Prof. J. A. Sittler, chairman.*

Meeting in April 1956 in Chicago, six members of this group appropriated the comprehensive report submitted two years ago (cf. FOC Paper 21, pp. 22-24) as the basis for continuing study. Assignments were meted out to all the members, not to write essays, but to lead discussion on nine related questions:

the biblical foundation of Christian worship ; creation, time and eternity ; the relation of the Word of God and Sacraments ; the free work of the Holy Spirit in worship ; the bearing of the relation of Scripture and Tradition upon worship ; the eschatological dimension ; diversity and unity of form ; the place of the Eucharist ; and the meaning of symbols, ancient and contemporary, for Christian worship. Further definitions and assignments of these questions will be the expected outcome of another meeting, 11-13 October 1956.

This commission is also recommending to the Working Committee the appointment of four new members who are expert in biblical studies.

h) Theological Commission on Institutionalism. Dean W. G. Muelder, chairman.

The long desired and awaited study of the "social and cultural factors affecting unity" has begun auspiciously. At Davos in 1955, Dean Muelder presented his brilliant paper on the problem of institutionalism (Ecumenical Review, January 1956). The Working Committee thereupon defined the terms of reference for a long-range study, and invited Dean Muelder to be chairman of the study commission to be formed. During the past year Dr. Nils Ehrenström, now a professor at Boston, has been acting as secretary of this project. Letters of enquiry, accompanied by the aforementioned essay, were sent to 60 persons in various parts of the world. Upon the basis of replies received, a definite plan of study was formulated and is now submitted to the Working Committee. (Cf. pp. 13-16.)

i) Proselytism and Religious Liberty

This highly important study is now being carried on by a group which is directly responsible to the Central Committee of the WCC. Bishop Angus Dun is chairman. The meeting time of the group presently overlaps that of the Working Committee, and it is held in nearby Arnoldshain. The study is being pursued under three headings : fact-finding survey, the sociological and legal problem, and the theological and ecclesiastical implications. Theologians representing Faith and Order are studying the third kind of question. This whole matter will receive special attention at the meeting of the Central Committee in Hungary, 28 July - 5 August.

j) *Tempo and Fruition of Studies*

With regard to the impressive work being done by these eight commissions, two questions need to be pondered.

(1) The first has to do with the tempo of the studies. This was raised by Dr. Tomkins at our Davos meeting, but not really discussed there. Without sacrificing the leisurely character of ecumenical scholarship and exchange, how can we have these various studies related both to the periodic Assemblies of the WCC and to union movements among churches? If it is true, as many say, that the widest interest in ecumenical studies can be fostered before particular study projects are brought to an end, how can greater numbers of Christians be enlisted informally in them? Is there reason to decide that all these present studies should be terminated in time for the convening of another world conference on Faith and Order, which could consider their results?

(2) What means of publishing the results of these studies should be employed? There are some who question the value of additional volumes of short essays by many authors, and suggest that one person be asked to gather up the findings of each commission in a book of which he is the author. Is this plan desirable? Could financial resources for such a project be secured? Is there yet a better way to follow?

3. STUDIES ON UNITY OUTSIDE THE COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER. *Obviously we have no monopoly on the study of questions of faith and order. Indeed it is most encouraging to see how increasing numbers of theological groups are grappling with such issues. Some of these are interdenominational, and consciously though unofficially related to the work of the Commission on Faith and Order, such as those in the British Council of Churches, the Canadian Council of Churches, New Zealand, Australia, France, Germany, Sweden and U.S.A. Others are the negotiating committees between certain churches which produce materials of distinctive value : the Lutheran and Reformed intercommunion agreement in Holland ; the Church of South India-Lutheran conversations ; the negotiations of the Church of England with both the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church ; and the church union talks in North India and Pakistan and in Ceylon. Finally there are numerous important studies being pursued within certain denominations or confessional families : the Disciples of Christ, the Church of Scotland on Baptism, the theological committees of the Lutheran*

World Federation, Presbyterian World Alliance, Methodist World Council, etc. And these are all apart from the countless informal meetings and the numerous books and articles which are constantly being published. In short, we may take heart in the knowledge that a vast amount of scholarship, reflection and intellectual encounter is now being devoted to our primary concern.

4. *REGIONAL CONFERENCES AND CONSULTATIONS.* At Davos last year an important principle was formulated by the Working Committee and approved by the Central Committee : that the Commission on Faith and Order should cooperate fully with regional or national conferences which are initiated by churches concerned, and also take responsibility for promoting other regional or national consultations as may be deemed desirable. This principle has not had to wait long to be applied practically. It should be noted with appreciation that the Rockefeller Fund has given us the sum of \$8000 for meeting the costs of this special task of the Commission. And three of such regional meetings are already in the course of preparation :

a) *North American Conference on "The Nature of the Unity We Seek", Oberlin, Ohio, 3-10 September 1957.* Sponsored by the U.S. Conference for the WCC, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the Canadian Council of Churches, this will be the most important conference on Christian unity yet held in North America. Meticulous study preparations covering a wide range of subjects are being made by sixteen groups involving about 250 persons. Prof. Paul Minear is giving one-half of his time to coordinating this preparation. And it is also expected that as many as 300-500 local groups will discuss aspects of the question of unity, using Dr. Minear's excellent study guide called *Ecumenical Conversations*. The conference itself will be constituted of 300 church delegates and not more than 100 consultants. Prior to it there will be held a conference of the Interseminary Movement on "The Nature of the Ministry We Seek". This will be attended by about 2000 theological students and teachers. Enthusiastic anticipation of this event is quite evident in U.S.A. and Canada.

b) *European Lutheran-Reformed Consultation.* Following plans made at Davos in 1955, a committee of 20 theologians was convened at Arnoldshain, 12-14 March 1956. The purpose of this consultation was explained by Prof. d'Espine, acting

chairman of the group, and the subject matter for study was suggested in papers by Prof. Roger Mehl and Prof. C. W. Mönnich. It was ultimately the consensus that this conversation should go on for several years before the convening of a larger meeting. Meanwhile certain studies on the theme "The Authority of the Holy Scriptures for the Proclamation of the Church" should be pursued. Elected as co-chairmen of the committee were Prof. Mehl and Rektor Hoffmann. The next meeting will be held at Arnoldshain, 8-12 April 1957.

c) *Indian Faith and Order Conference 1957.* In the context of church union discussions and general interest in India, a conference will be held in the spring of 1957. About 30 persons, delegated by their churches, will deal with such questions as: the marks of the ministry, ministry and church unity, and the theology of Baptism and confirmation. The responsibility for planning this conference lies chiefly with Dr. John Sadiq, counselled by Principal Chandran and Bishop Lash.

5. *SECRETARY'S TRAVEL.* Once again I have had the privilege of travelling extensively on behalf of the Commission. During the past twelve months I have often been absent from Geneva, spending 11 weeks in the U.S.A. and Canada, and 11 weeks as well in Germany, Sweden, France and England. A travel diary of the American journey has been distributed already. In all these countries I have enjoyed the hospitality of members and friends of the Commission (and since 1953 I have visited 49 members in their own homes). Naturally there have been numerous occasions for lecturing, conversing and learning about distinctive attitudes and problems of many churches. And I have been greatly aided because of the competence of Miss Margaret Rhodes to take care of matters in the Geneva office during my absence. It is for this service and many others that I wish at this point to thank her, and express my satisfaction in her promotion to the position of Editorial Assistant, by action of the WCC Executive Committee in February.

6. *CHURCH UNION NEGOTIATIONS.* We are all aware of the remarkable extension and acceleration of conversations between churches looking towards intercommunion and merger in these times. In Geneva we do our best to keep informed on all these developments so as to prepare annually the survey which is published in *The Ecumenical Review*. But during the past year another service has been initiated. We have collected a rather large supply of diverse pamphlets and other small publications

relating to specific church union negotiations. We can now offer these to libraries and interested persons at very small cost. (A list is available from the Geneva office.)

More important, the Commission on Faith and Order can now act freely on the project of planning periodic consultations on church unions, since the Central Committee last year clarified and approved the Commission's competence to do so. A third ecumenical consultation may well be in order at the time of the various WCC meetings in America during the summer of 1957.

7. **PRAYER FOR UNITY.** It is most regrettable that so much of our discussion in past meetings has been more concerned with when to pray, than with how and what to pray for. The inconvenience of seemingly "competitive" periods of ecumenical observance of prayer continues, but so far as the WCC is concerned, there seems to be little hope just now of passing beyond the stage of last year's discussion. Meanwhile there is evidence that the observance of 18th-25th January as a time of prayer for unity is increasing in Europe and Asia. And the similar kind of observance at Ascensiontide is gaining support in Australia. The 18-25 January observance is very limited in America, chiefly because of the prevalence of a thoroughly sectarian purpose for the "Octave" among Roman Catholics.

We should ask ourselves if the Commission on Faith and Order cannot be far more effective in the promotion of earnest prayer for unity, both during one week and throughout the year. The present efforts are still haphazard and very limited in influence. Moreover, the literature, prepared now by the secretary, ought to be governed by a committee and, for variety, prepared by various persons of the Commission. As one participates ever longer in the ecumenical movement, he feels increasingly the primal need for a "growing together" in prayer, and recognizes that divisions, like demons, can be cast out only through prayer.

Commenting upon the report, **Professor Outler** stressed the importance of giving wide though discriminate circulation to the many papers produced in these studies. **The Chairman** proposed that titles of such papers as are not confidential could be published in the *Bulletin* of the Division of Studies and offered to those making request. **The Secretary** declared that, in addition, various theological journals in several languages are prepared to publish these papers. The Working Committee has the task of evaluating the work of the theological commissions, and so all papers and reports should be available to its members upon request.

3. WEEK OF PRAYER FOR UNITY

The Secretary explained that no effort would be made this year to settle the vexing question of an "ecumenical" week of prayer, but rather to find ways of extending the practice of prayer for unity.

Dr. Jacob moved that the secretariat be responsible for the preparation of a small ecumenical prayer book, including appropriate prayers and readings, with sources identified, from various churches and countries. In discussion, Professor Florovsky spoke of the difficulty for the Orthodox in using such liturgical materials, but Professor Outler proposed that the Orthodox could make a major contribution to the booklet. The Chairman thought that a simple booklet in English, French and German could be prepared, being based upon the days of the week. On different days intercessions should be offered for the various confessions or communions. It could be composed in such a way as to be appropriate for both public and private devotion.

The Secretary was instructed to seek the counsel of a selected group of persons and bring specific plans for such a book of prayers to another meeting. The Secretary would also continue to prepare, or cause to be prepared, each year a small leaflet for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and ask the counsel of the above-mentioned group. This group will include: Dr. O. S. Tomkins, Dr. Olive Wyon, Bishop Newbigin, Dr. J. Winterhager, M^{lle} S. de Dietrich, Prof. S. J. England, Metropolitan James of Melita, the Rev. F. House, Dr. Leslie Cooke, the Rev. John Garrett, and Mr. A. de Weymarn.

4. THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONALISM

The Secretary read the following memorandum from Dean W. G. Muelder:

The ecumenical movement is increasingly recognizing the rôle — always operative, sometimes decisive — played by social and cultural factors in the tangled interaction of unitive and divisive forces in the Church. This recognition has been slow to develop, and it must be admitted that it does not yet inform the Faith and Order program as a whole. The causes of this neglect would, themselves, be an interesting study. It would undoubtedly shed revealing sidelights on current assumptions about the nature of Christianity and the interrelation of Church and society. It points up the well-known self-sufficiency and introversion of much theologizing, both traditional and current. Perhaps it is a symptom, too, of the subtle docetism which remains such a pervasive and persuasive temptation in Christian thought, not least today. It reflects also the incompatibility of temper and of research methods between theology and sociology; their blessed marriage is still part of the eschatological hope. A more prosaic explanation would, of course, be that the Faith and Order Movement, while aware of other aspects such as the

so-called "non-theological" factors, has been obliged, for lack of resources in its earlier stages, to concentrate on issues of greater immediacy.

However that may be, it is useful to recall briefly the repeated attempts made by the Faith and Order Commission to focus attention on this indisputable ingredient in all inter-church relations. In preparation for the Edinburgh Conference in 1937, an American group under Dean Sperry produced a pioneering report on "The Non-theological Factors in the Making and Unmaking of Church Union". It shared the not infrequent fate of preparatory reports in receiving hardly any attention at the conference, and even less afterwards. The re-appraisal of the ecumenical situation after the second World War, and reflection on the endeavors of the Amsterdam Assembly to redefine the criss-cross patterns of disunity, made it evident that a new inquiry was called for. The matter was strikingly highlighted in the now famous letter of June 1949 by Professor C. H. Dodd on unavowed motivations and unconscious assumptions in inter-church attitudes. It was followed up in an international consultation, and the ensuing report, "Social and Cultural Factors in Church Divisions", was presented to the Lund Conference which paid considerable attention to the subject and recommended it for intensive study. In the following year, the Faith and Order Secretary was instructed to circularize universities and theology seminars "with a view to promoting research in concrete situations where social and cultural factors operated".

At the Davos meeting in 1955, the Working Committee felt the time was ripe for launching a commission on the subject, and started by electing a chairman who, for a year, would carry on the study by correspondence with experts in the field of sociology of religion. Authorized to select an interim secretary of the Commission, I asked Dr. Nils Ehrenström, Boston, to serve in that capacity. The terms of reference for this study were defined as follows:

"To make a study of institutionalism as it affects all churches, and in particular:

1. The self-criticism of churches by which they may see their own structures sociologically as well as theologically;
2. The relations both positive and negative of the churches to each other in the ecumenical conversation;
3. The pattern of church relations which is finding expression in the World Council of Churches as an institution."

My paper on "Institutional Factors affecting Unity and Disunity", published in the January issue of *The Ecumenical Review*, was sent out to some 60 selected people around the world with an accompanying letter. Twelve replies have come to hand. They indicate a gratifying interest in the matter and some of them contain a number of very valuable suggestions. It may be noted in passing that several among the correspondents have not paid attention to the limited perspective of this inquiry, namely factors affecting unity and disunity, and have instead offered general considerations on a sociological study of the Church, etc.

On the basis of the correspondence, Dr. Ehrenström and I have formulated a series of specific projects which are listed below. They are self-explanatory and I need not expatiate on them. They are as yet of a tentative nature.

Proposed Projects

- I. The church as a community of the Spirit and as an institution — a theological, sociological and juridical inquiry.
- II. Inter-personal and inter-group relations characteristic of different church types — a comparative study.
- III. Analytical and evaluative case studies on institutional factors affecting particular inter-church situations.
 1. Projected and consummated unions in South and North India.
 2. The merger negotiations between the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church in the U.S.A.
 3. The Methodist reunion in the U.S.A.
 4. Lessons to be drawn from the experience of inter-church cooperation in the Federal and National Councils of Churches in America.
 5. The Kyodan in Japan.
- IV. Church bureaucracy.
 1. The nature, sources, and control of power in the Church.
 2. Patterns of bureaucracy in individual denominations — case studies.
 3. Bureaucracy in missionary societies.
- V. The World Council of Churches as an ecumenical laboratory of institutional interaction and its relation to the institutional structures and functions of the member churches — a factual and evaluative study.

The above projects may, in our judgement, be sufficient as a start. As they are being developed, further possibilities of expanding the range of collaboration will receive attention. For the moment, we wish to merely list some additional topics which likewise deserve study:

1. *Koinonia* and institution in the primitive church, and the emergence of malfunctioning institutionalism.
2. The comparative size of Christian bodies and institutions, as it affects the membership composition of inter-denominational agencies, policies and practices of interchurch cooperation, and merger negotiations.

Membership

As regards the membership of the Commission, it would seem advisable to proceed slowly and to appoint for the moment only a nucleus. Further members may be added later — the principles of selection being competence and active participation, and secondly, a balanced geographical and denominational spread. Efforts will be made to extend the collaboration beyond the actual membership of the Commission by encouraging individual and local group studies, research projects by graduate students in theological and sociological seminars, etc. Whether or not the Commission — like other Faith and Order Commissions — should be divided in regional sections may be left open for later consideration.

This document was received with appreciation and evoked extended comment. Dr. Payne wondered what was meant by “church

types" in part II, and regretted the lack of a British study in part III. **Professor Outler** suggested the study of both a successful church union, such as the United Church of Canada and a failure in union negotiations such as that between the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. **Professor Trinterud** feared that the study might be pursued too exclusively along sociological lines, and suggested that it would be better to make a study of Institutionalism both theologically and non-theologically.

Professor Torrance observed that one of the fundamental problems of institutionalism is the tension between the Church as a people (*laos*) of the covenant and the Church as a nation (*ethnos*). Since the prime example of this is found in the history of Israel, it would be helpful to include such an inquiry in the whole study.

Dr. Payne added the suggestion of a study of Baptist-Disciples of Christ negotiations, and **Professor Trinterud** of the recent relations between the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church U.S. in America. **Professor Outler** hoped that there would be included in the new study commission some members who regard institutionalism not just negatively but see it as necessary to a certain degree in the lives of the churches.

All these suggestions, along with proposals of names of possible participants, were to be forwarded to Dean Muelder.

In the light of the five recommendations which conclude the above memorandum, it was **agreed** that :

(1) The Working Committee receives this interim report with general approval of the proposed studies ;

(2) The four persons named be invited to become members of the study commission, subject to the approval of their respective churches ;

(3) The two officers of the study commission, in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Committee and the Secretary of the Faith and Order Commission, could invite additional members by July 1957, bringing the total to no more than ten members. Others could be asked to serve as consultants at the first proposed meeting, and further members could be considered by the Working Committee in 1957 ;

(4) A meeting should be held in America in July 1957 ;

(5) There should be due note taken by officers of the other theological commissions of the problem of Institutionalism as it relates to their particular studies, and their studies in turn should be noted and considered by the officers of the commission on Institutionalism. (It is the duty of the Secretary of Faith and Order to supply officers of all the theological commissions with all papers and reports produced.)

5. THEOLOGICAL COMMISSIONS ON WORSHIP

A. North America

Professor Trinterud reported on the work of the American commission, along lines already outlined in the Secretary's report (cf. pp. 7-8). Little can be added until after the meeting in October, except to say that two great problems of liturgy confronted many American churches: the development of rigid stereotypes of a superficial character in the name of the free work of the Holy Spirit, and the unreflective eclecticism which brings together many incompatible elements.

It was agreed that the following persons should be invited to join the commission, subject to approval of their respective churches:

Prof. MARKUS BARTH (Presbyterian, U.S.A.)

Prof. R. E. CUSHMAN (Methodist Church) to replace Prof.

D. C. SHIPLEY, who has resigned because of ill health

Prof. J. P. HYATT (Disciples of Christ)

Prof. J. C. RYLAARSDAM (Reformed Church in America)

Prof. F. W. YOUNG (Protestant Episcopal Church)

B. Europe

The Secretary explained that the present chairman of this commission, Dr. A. M. Ramsey, having recently become Archbishop of York, may have to offer his resignation¹. The vice-chairman, Professor Prenter, unfortunately could not be considered as successor to the chairmanship, in view of the fact that there are already three Lutheran chairmen of theological commissions. Therefore the names of two other Anglican scholars were recommended, and it was agreed that the Chairman and Secretary be authorized to take action in the event of the Archbishop's resignation.

The Committee then gave attention to the memorandum by the Rev. A. R. George, secretary of the Worship Commission. This was written as the basis for discussion at the first meeting of the commission, planned for the spring of 1957. It proposes to divide the study into two main sections: the theology of worship in the Bible, and the imagery employed in worship. Inasmuch as the memorandum itself is too long for inclusion in the minutes, it is sufficient to note that the substance of the Committee's discussion was transmitted to Mr. George.

C. Asia

Cf. Secretary's report, p. 7.

¹ The Archbishop's resignation has since been received.

6. THEOLOGICAL COMMISSIONS ON TRADITION [AND TRADITIONS

A. North America

Professor Outler, the chairman of this commission, gave a report on the meeting held in New York, 11-14 May 1956, attended by all the members. Already they have become an intimate, working group, aware of existing prejudices and the possibility of altering viewpoints in the light of candid criticisms. In the papers presented and discussed thus far they had the exciting sense of discovery as well as the sober recognition of deep differences of viewpoint and interpretation. The chief subject of controversy had been the assertion of Prof. Pauck that we must avoid being bound by an ancient, outmoded and essentially Roman Catholic notion of Tradition; instead it is necessary to be concerned with historical development and the way history affects contemporary theological thinking. **Professor Florovsky** commented on the importance of this debate in the commission's meeting, and maintained that Prof. Pauck's view, though widely held, is both anti-historical and inimical to Scripture itself.

Professor Torrance asked whether attention was being given to the relation of Tradition and creation, and **Professor Schlink** asked if the study took account of eschatology. **Professor Outler** replied to both questions by saying such considerations would be dealt with as the study progressed. **Dr. Payne** referred to the importance of the "left wing" tradition of the Church under the Cross.

After further discussion, it was agreed to accept this report, and to invite as members of the theological commission Prof. R. B. Y. Scott (United Church of Canada) and Prof. W. A. Clebsch (Protestant Episcopal Church).

B. Europe

Cf. Secretary's report, pp. 5-6.

7. THEOLOGICAL COMMISSIONS ON CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

A. Europe

Professor Wingren described the meeting held at Lund in September 1955. Five questions were discussed but left unresolved:

(1) The distinction between the being (ontology) of Jesus Christ and His saving work (soteriology).

(2) The diversity of views within the New Testament and the resultant difficulty of speaking about a biblical doctrine.

(3) The *means* through which Christ is presently at work, e.g. the ministry.

(4) The legitimacy of singling out the "Body of Christ" from other biblical images of the Church.

(5) The relation of the Church to the future and the Last Judgment.

Professor Torrance thought the figure of "Body" was usually misunderstood because interpreted in a narrowly organic sense. But in the New Testament it means the community of love where Christ meets us. This community has a form which is determined by the Incarnation: such is the importance of the being of Christ for the being of the Church. If one thinks of Christ only in terms of His benefits, there can really be no doctrine of the nature of the Church.

Professor Schlink expressed doubts about the unique importance of the Body, and referred to the frequent usage of the term "People" and the *ecclesia* in the New Testament. **Professor Torrance** responded with the observation that St. Paul was the natural heir to the concept of People of God, but was also confronted with the problem of the relation of the Church to the unique Lord, the many to the one. The figure of the Body (*soma*) was the only adequate one for describing both the internal unity of the Church and its oneness with Christ. He doubted that St. Paul's *soma*-concept was the same as the Gnostics'. **Professor Outler** said it was basically an exegetical, not a systematic, problem, and that all the biblical images must be brought into consideration, as Professor Minear had done in his recent paper for the theological commission in America. It was good that plans for such continuing study had been made already.

The Secretary announced that Principal Marsh had felt obliged by the press of work to give up his position as secretary of this theological commission. It was agreed to appoint Dr. G. W. Bromiley (Church of England) as his successor.

B. America

For lack of any member present who attended the meeting in August 1955, no report was made. Cf. Secretary's report, p. 5.

8. THE TEMPO OF FAITH AND ORDER STUDY

The Chairman said that the liberty of the various theological commissions must be guarded so that they can do their work properly. Nevertheless, as part of the World Council and a wider movement they were responsible for keeping alive, in Central Committee and Assembly, the whole question of Christian unity. Some time-scheme is needed, as well as a way of relating these studies to the larger meetings of the World Council.

Dr. Payne declared that the Faith and Order Commission, at its meeting in 1957, would have to come to some understanding on the place of Faith and Order in the 1960 Assembly. He thought that the theological commissions might by next year produce interim reports concerning the general course of discussion, questions still needing attention, provisional agreements, etc.

Professor Torrance thought that this problem gave a clear direction to the future task of the Working Committee, namely, to spend a good part of each meeting in more basic theological study of the issues posed by the theological commissions, and of their inter-relationship and their relevance for the whole ecumenical movement. **Professor Wingren** reminded the Committee that it had already decided on Baptism as the focal point for our studies and the main subject for the 1957 meeting. **Bishop Newbigin** felt that a much wider question was needed, not for focus but inclusion of all studies, in the next Assembly, e.g. the North American conference theme, "The Nature of the Unity We Seek". **Professor Torrance** agreed on condition that such a broad theme be approached christologically. **Professor Outler** said he would not disagree with the christological emphasis, but that for the sake of the vast numbers of interested Christians he would prefer a question more readily comprehensible.

The Chairman said that this matter cannot be settled as yet, but it was agreed that, so much as possible, the theological commissions' work should be appropriated in the next Assembly. But what of the terminus for all these studies? Would 1963 not be a proper year for the results of studies, even if not complete, to be submitted to the churches? A conference could then be called to consider the findings of the commissions.

Professor Trinterud said that a conference composed of FOC members and members of theological commissions, augmented by some forty other consultants, would be sufficiently representative of the churches. **Professor d'Espine** doubted whether the time would be ripe for a Fourth World Conference, such as Lund 1952. **Professor Outler** said that the successor to Lund would be one to which the churches would send delegates. But the proposal for 1963 is of a different kind. Meanwhile the various regional conferences were serving an important purpose of extending Faith and Order discussions to the churches.

It was agreed that an enlarged meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order should be held in 1963, with about 200 participants in all, but that it should be an initiative of the Commission itself and not a conference of church delegates.

The Chairman referred to the related question, already raised in the Secretary's report, of the manner in which written results of the theological studies should be published. The value of more symposia is quite dubious. Would it be better to have one person in each theological commission designated for the task of writing

a book which would present a coherent summary of each group's work ?

Professor Trinterud thought it was too early to make a definite decision, although a decision in principle might now be made. **Professor Osborn** hoped that some selection of individual essays could be published. **Professor Outler** suggested an alternative : that not one report, but two or three books be written out of the experience of each of the commissions. There would be more ferment and stimulation in such books than might be expected in single reports.

No decision on this question was taken, it being deferred to a future meeting of the committee.

9. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the following meetings should be held next year at Yale University, New Haven, Conn., U.S.A. :

- 15-19 July : American Theological Commission on Christ and the Church
- 20 (a.m.) July : Working Committee
- 20 (p.m.)-25 (p.m.) July : Commission on Faith and Order
- 26 (a.m.)-28 (p.m.) July : Consultation on Church Unions.

A. Next Meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order

There was an extended discussion on the agenda for the meeting which led to the following general agreements :

1. Last year's decision (FOC Paper 22, p. 12) should be sustained and implemented by preparations for the Commission's study of Baptism as a major factor in Christian unity. The Theological Commission on Christ and the Church in Europe will prepare this study, beginning with the forthcoming paper by Prof. G. W. H. Lampe, and holding its own 1957 meeting in June. At the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in July, at least two mornings will be given to this discussion, and it can then be determined what further procedure should be followed by the Working Committee. It was suggested that the study of Baptism might find a place in the 1960 Assembly of the World Council, even though other relevant Faith and Order questions may then be treated as well.

2. As much time as possible must be kept for the Commission's consideration of the progress of the various theological commissions.

3. Because of the resignation of Archbishop Brilioth, a new chairman should be elected, upon nomination made by the Working Committee. At this juncture the Committee received Archbishop Brilioth's letter of resignation and asked the Chairman to write a letter to the Archbishop expressing profound gratitude for his long and distinguished service to the Faith and Order movement.

4. Certain new members should be elected to the Commission, upon nomination of the Working Committee. Only one vacancy had been created by death during the past year, that of the distinguished and beloved Pasteur Pierre Maury.

B. Consultation on Church Unions

It was agreed that the Secretary should consult representatives of various regions and churches to determine the programme for the consultation, and should have power to act on their advice. **Bishop Newbiggin** suggested that the consultation close on the evening of July 28th with an extended period of prayer for unity.

Persons proposed as advisers to the Secretary included: Dean Horton, Dr. James Kennedy, Bishop Manikam, Dr. James Mathews, Bishop Newbiggin, Dr. Niles, Dr. Payne, Dr. Arne Sovik, and Prof. Tindal.

10. REGIONAL CONFERENCES AND CONSULTATIONS

An important decision made by the Working Committee at Davos in 1955, and approved by the Central Committee, asserted the right and competence of the Commission to hold or sponsor regional meetings on Faith and Order (cf. FOC Paper 22, pp. 13-16). Reports were therefore made concerning several projects of this kind.

A. Lutheran-Reformed Consultation in Europe

Professor d'Espine declared that the chief "ecumenical problem" for most European members of the World Council was the ancient division between the Reformed and the Lutheran confessions, and that in the present time it is quite conceivable that many latent agreements can be revealed.

As a result of the meeting in Davos, July 30, 1955, of members of these confessions, a group composed of the Secretary, Dr. Harms and himself was asked to constitute a permanent committee of ten Lutheran and ten Reformed representatives. Of these twenty, the following attended a meeting at the Evangelical Academy in Arnoldshain, Germany, March 12-14, 1956: Prof. J. Bosc, Prof. P. Brunner, Prof. D. Cairns, Rektor G. Hoffmann, Prof. W. Kreck, Prof. W. Künneth, Prof. R. Mehl, Prälat W. Metzger, Prof. C. Miskotte, Prof. C. W. Mönnich, Prof. G. C. van Niftrik, Bishop A. Nygren, Prof. Th. Süss.

After much earnest and friendly discussion, they drew up a plan of study and consultation for some years to come, in preparation for an eventual consultation. They all agreed on the necessity of

prudence, both as to the temptation to reach premature agreements and to give the project undue publicity. One original and refreshing aspect of this meeting was that only French and German were spoken !

Dr. Payne suggested, and it was **agreed**, that papers emanating from this project should be distributed to members of the Working Committee and that these be kept in confidence.

Professor Osborn called attention to the importance of non-doctrinal factors in this whole question, and **Dr. Jacob** gave illustrations from the experience of the Evangelical Church of the Union in Germany. **Dr. Keith Bridston**, as visitor, told of the importance of this consultation for the churches of Indonesia, which are chiefly of Lutheran or Reformed background.

B. North American Study Conference on "The Nature of the Unity We Seek", September 3-10, 1957, at Oberlin, Ohio

The **Secretary** elaborated on his earlier report (p. 10). The ongoing studies of the Commission will be presented to the conference in major addresses by Prof. Calhoun, Dean Muelder, Prof. Outler and Prof. Sittler. It is significant that numerous members of more conservative churches outside the World Council are engaged or interested in the conference preparations.

Having no direct responsibility for this conference, the Committee received the report with appreciation.

C. Faith and Order Conference in India, 1957

Cf. Secretary's report, p. 11.

It was **agreed** that **Dr. Sadiq** be asked whether participants from Ceylon and Pakistan might also be invited.

D. Conference between Greek Orthodox and Other Churches

With reference to last year's decision, the **Secretary** reported on conversations with various Orthodox leaders, all of whom agreed to the desirability of a theological consultation somewhat broader than the immediate questions of Christian unity. It would be practicable to hold such a meeting before the meeting of the Central Committee at Rhodes in August, 1958. Initiative should still lie with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of Greece. And it was hoped that Metropolitan James of Melita would pursue the matter further with regard to ecclesiastical approval, while calling also upon the Secretary for whatever help his office might render. **Professor Florovsky** thought it was necessary to begin planning a programme now, by having the Chairman and Secretary correspond with members of the Commission, asking non-Orthodox to formulate the questions they would like to have discussed. It was **agreed** to authorize the two officers to take such steps as were needed towards preparation of the consultation.

11. RESPONSES TO THE EVANSTON REPORT ON "OUR ONENESS IN CHRIST AND OUR DISUNITY AS CHURCHES"

It was the Working Committee which made preparations for this Report at Evanston, and so also it has responsibility for studying reactions to it. Before the Committee was the Secretary's summary of responses thus far received from churches and individuals. A large portion of this summary follows.

RESPONSE TO SECTION I

General observations about the Report

It can be said with justification that the far-reaching effect of the Report has been greater than the paucity of official responses seems to indicate. The questions about the nature of Christian unity and the problem of division which are treated in it have appeared in manifold forms and places since the Assembly. Unquestionably a new impetus has been given by the Report to thinking about the whole problem of unity.

Certain dissatisfaction has been expressed because the issues raised in the Report are dealt with so hastily and superficially. Inasmuch as virtually the whole range of Faith and Order questions is digested in a report which was restricted in length, this inadequacy of treatment was inevitable.

A frequent criticism which was made and is to be duly heeded in the future has to do with the diction of the Report. The drafters are accused, perhaps justly, of avoiding definite and specific words in favour of more general and ambiguous ones. This was partly due to the brevity of the Report and the magnitude of the theme. Partly it was due to the nature of the theme itself, which is expressed in paradox. Nonetheless it seems clear that the value of future reports will be increased by the avoidance of vagueness and ambiguity.

One of the features of the Report most generally welcomed was its sturdy biblical foundation and orientation. Comparisons favourable to it were often drawn to the Faith and Order Report of the First Assembly, which consisted more of propositions about church unity and rather static comparisons of opposing views. The Evanston Report is thus recognized as a first fruit of the Lund Conference (1952), which called for common study of the Church and its unity in the light of the biblical witness to the saving work of God in Jesus Christ. Despite this patent biblical basis, however, some critics deplored the lack of correlation of this Report with the Assembly's Main Theme, i.e. the eschatological note is for them not sufficiently sounded with the theme of the Church's nature and mission¹.

Part I: "Our Oneness in Christ"

The Report declares of this first part that "we speak together with one mind" of the oneness of the Church. Responses and criticisms have vindicated this assertion of unanimity. A significant point seldom noted

¹ United Presbyterian Church; ALBERTZ, M., in *Ökumenische Rundschau*, Dec. 1955.

since Evanston is that in their Declaration concerning Faith and Order the Orthodox delegates accepted wholeheartedly Part I as "an able exposition of the New Testament doctrine of the Church"¹. Within this general unanimity there are naturally some diverse interpretations.

Two responses find the theological basis for unity described too exclusively in christological terms and lacking sufficient reference to the work of the Holy Spirit, and of God the Father².

Another asserts that the Report errs in making no distinction between the Church and the various churches or congregations, the implication being that what is said about the work of Jesus Christ for the Church cannot be applied equally to the churches³. Without this distinction, continues that response, it is wrong to suggest that there is a *growth* from unity as given to unity fully manifest. Another remarks, "The unity given us in Christ is no imperfect unity, which the Church gradually shall realize in a perfect manner. This idea is an impossible one"⁴. The consequence of such thinking is the overpowering temptation to develop strategic programmes for bringing this perfect unity to realization⁵. The same criticism is levelled against the Report's use of analogy between the Church, as both one and divided, and the Christian man, as both justified and sinner, or both "new man" and "old man"⁶. The employment of this analogy was a bold effort in the Report to express the essential paradox of the Section's theme itself, but opinion remains divided as to whether it is exegetically and theologically tenable. Clearly this is a matter for continuing reflection and study.

Part II: "Our Disunity as Churches"

It is from the description of church divisions and the suggestions for overcoming them that the Orthodox declaration dissociates itself.

The response of the Church of England asserts that it is in line with their general teaching to hold that divisions, or schisms, are within the Church, not necessarily apart from it.

This is the most controversial part of the Report. In the light of criticisms received it may be discussed in answer to three questions.

A. *Does the Report make a valid distinction between desirable diversity and all unjustifiable division?*

Some believe that this is a legitimate and useful distinction which helps us clarify the meaning of disunity and division, as opposed to mere differences of teaching and practice⁷. Diversities are, as gifts of God, very valuable for the Church as a whole, but they are not to be absolutized and made into principles of sectarian exclusion by particular groups within the Church.

But have divisions arisen simply as a result of such absolutizing? The Report is found to be rather vague and equivocal at this point. It admits that many divisions have arisen because of "sincere concern for the gospel". True enough. But sincere concern is not equivalent to

¹ *Evanston Report*, p. 92.

² Church of England, Congregational Union of England and Wales.

³ Disciples of Christ.

⁴ Church of Denmark.

⁵ Schleswig-Holstein, Disciples of Christ.

⁶ Church of Denmark, Church of England.

⁷ United Presbyterian Church. Also New Zealand Conference on Faith and Order, May 1955.

apprehension of the truth of the gospel¹. Some feel that the Report legitimizes all the ecclesiastical divisions of history by failing to face the questions of truth and falsehood involved². As one response explains, "Separations which have their origin in a deep concern for the truth of the gospel are not sinful. They are only sinful if the pretension that they have their origin in such a concern is not true"³. In short, it is the failure to define which diversities are legitimate that weakens the argument of the Report here.

B. *Is division sinful?*

The strong condemnation of division as the manifestation of sin has met welcome agreement, firm opposition, and frank questioning.

Several agree that the essence of the sin of division lies in the way it "obscures from men the sufficiency of Christ's atonement". This is a matter of importance for both the Christian mission and the interior community life of the Church. And although denominational or confessional divisions are the objects of the Report's discussion here, it is necessary to note that the same condemnation applies to any breaches of the fellowship in Christ which take place between Christians as persons. The unity of the Church is the working out of the reconciling ministry and sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

A few writers took exception to the charge that denominational divisions are sinful by asserting that these do not disrupt the "oneness in spirit" which binds all Christians⁴.

Most are willing to agree that the element of sin was present in every division which has taken place and that it characterized to a degree the actions of both sides involved. But opposition arises against the proposition that every act which has led to schism is in itself sinful. The Report does not say this or intend to say it, but it unfortunately permits such a misunderstanding to arise.

The basic question is not whether sin is involved in division, but rather *whose* sin and *what* sin?⁵ The argument of the Report follows that division must be dealt with as sin, namely, by repentance, appeal for divine forgiveness, and readiness to be amended and reconciled. But issue is taken with the Report's assertion that "we are culpably implicated in sin not wholly of our own making". Can we honestly repent of sin for which we are not personally responsible? Is not such repentance really hypocritical?⁶ "Just as for most people, once the war is underway, confessing they are sinners for waging it becomes increasingly unreal, so to the majority of us the confession of sin for the steps our forefathers took, and in which we follow, seems to savour of insincerity."⁷ In summary, those who object to the Report's paragraph on the sin of division are neither unaware of the pervasiveness of original sin nor unwilling to repent of divisions, but they resent the imprecision of this paragraph and look for specific identification of the form of sin inherent in division. Thus

¹ Dantine, W., Evangelical Church of the Augsburgian and Helvetic Confession, Austria; Church of Denmark.

² Church of England.

³ Church of Denmark.

⁴ REAM, N. S., *Christian Economics*, March 22, 1955.

⁵ Disciples of Christ.

⁶ Church of Denmark, Protestant Episcopal Church, Church of England.

⁷ Dykes, K. C., Address to British Council of Churches' Faith and Order Department, January 1956.

one response concludes, "Certainly we ought to repent of our own sins in connection with our divisions, our complacency in their continuance, our prejudice towards and intolerance of other Christian bodies" ¹.

C. *Can a Church overcome division by "dying with Christ"?*

The obedience unto death which the Report enjoins the churches to manifest involves their being prepared "to offer up some of their accustomed, inherited forms of life in uniting with other Churches without complete certainty as to all that will emerge from the step of faith". Many have hailed this as the most prophetic part of the Report, and have been content to liken this obedience to the biblical notion of dying with Christ before experiencing the resurrection ².

Admittedly there is a great power of suggestion in this analogy. But it has been questioned or opposed for several reasons. Some feel that the paragraph is too general to permit clear understanding of what is intended ³. Others believe that the use of the analogy is unfortunate because it is biblically unsound and theologically suspect ⁴. Still others detect in this paragraph an expression of so-called "unionism" which is inconsistent with the purpose of the World Council of Churches ⁵. This last criticism arises from a deep-rooted and persistent difference of thought concerning the relation of church unions to church unity, a difference which is not resolved in the Report itself but rather reflected there.

Part III: "The Action of Faith"

Those who prepared the responses and criticisms realized that the Report's theological discussion of unity and division had to be followed by suggestions for specific action. The fact that few comments were made concerning the eight "actions of faith" indicates a tacit approval of them. But two years is too short a time to tell whether this approval has issued in action by the churches.

Only random observations about these calls to action can be made.

In (ii) concerning the common study of Holy Scripture there is a note on the importance of Christian Tradition which elicited some approval ⁶. This consideration could save the ecumenical discussion from a lack of the sense of time and history of the Church, and also cast light on many factors of present divisions ⁷. It should be noted that the Faith and Order Commission is now pursuing a study of Tradition and the Various Traditions.

In connection with (v) concerning Baptism and Eucharist, the Church of England submitted a paper by Dr. J. A. T. Robinson, in which he deplores the lack of reference to intercommunion in the Report, and proceeds to offer a promising interpretation of con-celebration.

With regard to recognizing church ministries (vi) the Report was found to be too indefinite to command action. The urgency of an ecumenical study on the meaning of the priesthood was indicated ⁷.

Finally most commentators recognize that prayer for unity (viii) is the easiest step to recommend and the most difficult to practise with patience.

¹ Church of England.

² United Presbyterian Church.

³ Church of England.

⁴ Church of Denmark, Ecumenical Study Group of Regensburg.

⁵ Ecumenical Council of Finland, Schleswig-Holstein.

⁶ United Protestant Church of the Pfalz.

⁷ Protestant Episcopal Church.

It was rightly pointed out that prayer is not something to be *used* for securing unity¹, but is the indispensable condition of all thought and action respecting it.

Conclusion

The portion of the Report most vigorously debated at Evanston was the closing sentence, affirming our hope that God "may enable us to grow together". Yet this dynamic concept received little attention in the responses, despite the statement by one writer that this was "the greatest thought of Evanston"².

Note : Several very sympathetic and helpful criticisms of the Faith and Order Report have been written by Roman Catholic theologians, including C.-J. Dumont, O.P., C. Lialine, O.S.B., G. Tavard, A.A., C. Boyer, S.J., and B. Lambert, O.P. These deal primarily with the problem of the sin of division and the question of applying the *simul justus et peccator* to the Church, both conceptions being inconsistent with Roman Catholic teaching.

Discussion of the responses dealt with three main questions :

(a) The Church as "simul justa et peccatrix"

The importance of Baptism as a corporate act was stressed by **Professor Torrance**. A Christian individual can readily recognize himself as both justified and sinner, but if he fails to see the whole Church as also justified and sinful, he exposes the individualism of his viewpoint. Strangely, this is just the fault in the thinking of Roman Catholics. Truly it cannot be said that Christ was *simul justus et peccator* ; but He died for the Church, which comes under His judgment. The Church is not sinless. But we need a clearer understanding of the relation of the individual to the Church.

Bishop Newbigin thought this idea, if true, is of central importance for church unity. If the phrase *simul justus* could not be applied to *Una Sancta*, the word "*Sancta*" was being conceived in a non-biblical way, possibly concealing an inadmissible Platonic distinction between an ideal and an actual church. **Professor Outler** asked how the discrepancy between the Church's holiness and members' sin could otherwise be accounted for. The reality of sin in both individual and community had to be acknowledged. A distinction had to be made between the manifest holiness of God's justifying grace in Church and individual, and the necessity of repentance for even the "saints" of the New Testament. If a saint must repent, so must the whole communion of saints, which is the Church.

Professor Torrance said the matter hinged on christology, and here our difference with Roman Catholics is sharp. We need to take more seriously that the Word of God assumed our *sarx*, i.e. our fallen humanity (not one immaculately conceived) and in so

¹ Disciples of Christ, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Schleswig-Holstein.

² MEHL, R., *Analyse du Rapport et thèmes de réflexion*.

doing hallowed it. The doctrine of the Church needs to be thought out in terms of the fact that Christ Jesus assumed our humanity and sanctified Himself. The Church is *sancta* in Christ's sanctification.

Professor Outler pointed out that Jesus Christ was "yet without sin". Was humanity therefore fallen on purpose? Is humanity sinful in itself? **Professor Florovsky** asked further, if the divine assumes human nature how can this nature then be anything but sinless? **Professor Torrance** said that Roman Catholics miss the whole point in just this way. They make scholastic distinctions in the meaning of sin and sins. He emphasized, with Luther, that sin is to be defined from the perspective of the fact that Christ died for us. When Luther insisted that Christ died for the whole man, not a part of him, he broke the medieval notion of sin, which both Roman Catholics and Protestant "liberals" still embrace.

(b) Is division sinful?

Professor Florovsky declared that more precision was needed in the use of "sin" in the whole discussion. It had various meanings in different contexts. Orthodox and Roman Catholics could speak as readily as Protestants about sin in the history of the Church, and they could even apply the word to congregations. Otherwise there could be no explanation for schisms. But they could not say that the Holy Catholic Church is sinful. At this point they would insist on humility, because everything is given by God. But then Protestants, emphasizing total depravity, would charge them with Pelagianism. Thus the misunderstanding.

Professor Outler said that the Protestant view of total depravity did not mean that everything in all respects is corrupt, but that in some respects everything is so touched, even in the Church.

Dr. Payne suggested that this controversy needed systematic treatment in *The Ecumenical Review*, and that Roman Catholic theologians should be engaged in it. As assistant editor, **Dr. Harms** agreed, and also told of the staff working group in Geneva which is dealing with just this question.

(c) The question of heresy, or distinction between truth and falsehood in doctrine

The Chairman pointed out that this question was significant for both church unity and the nature of the World Council. Because it is so difficult, however, it is best for the Committee to avoid discussion now and press the Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions to give it adequate attention.

(The valuable paper by Prof. J. A. T. Robinson, which accompanied the Response of the Church of England, was examined by the Committee. It was noted that this will appear in *The Ecumenical Review*.)

12. REVISION OF "THE CHURCH, THE CHURCHES, AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES", TORONTO 1950

The **Secretary** presented a draft revision of this famous document¹, explaining that the Central Committee in 1955 called for further work on the ecclesiological significance of the WCC. How could the Working Committee aid in this task?

After numerous comments on content and diction of the draft, it was apparent that the many unresolved questions need more patient treatment by the Committee. The **Chairman** pointed out that the "Toronto Statement" had never thus far been on their agenda. **Dr. Visser 't Hooft** said that the document was primarily of the Central Committee's making, but that much help was needed from Faith and Order members. Several persons present promised to study the draft in the near future and offer their criticisms.

The **Chairman** suggested that this matter deserves a place on the agenda of the Commission's meeting in 1957, with proper preparation for discussion during the interim.

It was then agreed: (1) That the draft revision was commended to the Central Committee as an improvement upon the 1950 version, with the hope that the Central Committee might publish a revised statement; (2) That time be allowed for this subject at the 1957 meeting of the Commission, with contributions being written beforehand by various members and collated by the Secretary; (3) That the Working Committee consider this to be a major task for several years to come.

13. DIVISION OF STUDIES

Dr. Harms told of the inauguration this year of the biblical study on "The Lordship of Christ over the World and the Church", intimating that it was closely related to various Faith and Order studies. The **Chairman** said that the Committee's interest was strong, but that the best it could do would be to keep in touch with the study, especially through liaison with the two theological commissions on Christ and the Church, and to make such responses as members felt necessary.

Dr. Harms also described the recent consultation on the training of the ministry.

Also **Dr. Skoglund** reported on the meeting of the commission studying Proselytism and Religious Liberty, a project which began in the Working Committee in 1953 but which has since become a part of the Central Committee's programme.

¹ See *The Ecumenical Review*, Oct. 1950

14. SECRETARY'S TRAVEL

It was agreed that the Secretary could spend five months in the United States in 1957 in connection with various Faith and Order meetings. The Chairman took this opportunity to express the Committee's thanks and appreciation for the Secretary's work.

The meeting was adjourned until July 20, 1957.

(Worship services in the Evangelical Church of Herrenalb were led for the Committee by Dr. Jacob and Professor Outler, and then for the larger number of World Council committee members by Dr. Berkhof.)

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- Evanston Speaks* — Message, Section Reports etc. of Second Assembly. SCM Press, London, 2s. 6d.; Geneva, Sw. fr. 2.—; New York, \$. 50
- Foi et Constitution* — brochure contenant la documentation relative à cette Section de l'Assemblée. Delachaux & Niestlé, Neuchâtel et Paris, 1954. Fr. s. 1.75; Fr. fr. 150.—.
- FOC No. 21 Minutes of Faith and Order Commission meeting, Chicago, 3-7 September 1954. Geneva, Sw. fr. 1.50; British Council of Churches, London, 2s.; WCC, New York, \$. 40
- FOC No. 22 Minutes of Working Committee meeting, Davos, 25-30 July 1955. Sw. fr. 1.—; 1s. 6d.; \$. 25
- FOC No. 23 Minutes of Working Committee meeting, Herrenalb, Germany, 17-20 July 1956, Sw. Fr. 2.—; 2s. 6d.; \$. 50
- FOC No. 11b Survey of Church Union Negotiations (offprint from *The Ecumenical Review*, October 1955). Sw. fr. —.50; 9d.; \$. 15
- Leaflet for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*, in English, German and French: Geneva, Sw. fr. 3.50; British Council of Churches, London, 5s.; WCC, New York, \$1.— per 100 copies.
- Church Union Schemes, Agreements on Intercommunion etc.* — a number of the most recent documents are available from the Faith and Order office in Geneva. A list of these may be obtained from the Secretary.

